

## Testimony in Support of

Raised Bill- H.B. No. 5277 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT THAT PROMOTES ACCESSIBILITY IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES.

Committee on Public Health

Public Hearing

March 7, 2022

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Mary Daugherty Abram and Representative Jonathan Steinberg, members of the Public Health committee and distinguished legislators,

My name is Susan Salters. I am a resident of Manchester, CT and a disability advocate at Independence Unlimited in Hartford, CT. I come before you today to testify in support of Raised Bill H.B No. 5277 An Act Concerning the Establishment of Technical Standards for Medical Diagnostic Equipment that Promotes Accessibility in Health Care Facilities. I am very concerned that some of our most vulnerable citizens are denied proper healthcare examinations and procedures due to the lack of accessible medical diagnostic equipment including adjustable exam tables, available weigh scales and lifts in Connecticut hospitals, clinics, long term care facilities and doctor's offices. This nonexistence of proper medical equipment prevents people with mobility disabilities from receiving complete, appropriate and equal primary and specialty healthcare.

Besides the physical effects of this problem, there are negative social, psychological and economic consequences that 9% (55,000) of Connecticut residents are forced to contend with on a regular basis. Imagine if you were a woman who is advised to obtain a mastectomy instead of a less invasive procedure only because the mammography equipment was not adequately adjustable for the doctor to make a concise diagnosis. Or the doctor doesn't have proof of how much the patient weighs because no wheelchair accessible weigh scale is available and he guesses as to what dosage to recommend only to find out the amount is incorrect and causes increased but avoidable medical issues. It's even been reported that some medical professionals refuse to even see patients with mobility limitations because they have no equipment with which to examine them. After more than 10 years of research on this topic, it has been revealed that physicians and other healthcare providers do not employ accessible medical equipment for routine care of patients with mobility limitations. Why?

Some reasons for the scarcity of available and convenient accessible medical diagnostic equipment are claimed to be that:

- Doctors and other healthcare providers are unaware of the existence of accessible medical devices
- There is an absence of understanding in the health care community as to whose responsibility it is to provide this equipment and to whom
- Appropriate training of medical providers on how to use this equipment safely isn't routinely offered to medical students, staff or medical assistants
- Purchasing specialized medical diagnostic is expensive when only needed by a small number of patients
- A little-known Federal Tax credit is offered for the purchase of these products to help healthcare providers comply

It's time to stop this harmful, discriminatory practice that may even be a matter of life and death for people with disabilities. I suggest that not offering Connecticut residents medical examinations using appropriately accessible medical equipment is a significant barrier to proper healthcare for this medically risky underserved population. I concur with this legislation that the State of CT needs to 1) establish clear, concise technical standards for accessible medical equipment that meets or exceeds those standards developed by the Federal Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act 2) REQUIRE doctors and medical facilities to purchase accessible diagnostic medical equipment that meets these guidelines 3) that medical personal be properly trained to use this equipment and assist patients with mobility limitations to be examined properly. After 30 years of waiting, people with mobility limitations deserve to have their medical needs addressed in a fair and equal way.

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